




**United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Fire Management Branch
National Interagency Fire Center
3833 South Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705**



Refer to: FMB1700008

December 20, 2016

Memorandum

To: Regional Fire Management Coordinators, Regions 1-8
From: Chief, Branch of Fire Management 
Subject: REVISED: 2017 Guidance for Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Policy
Memorandum 2011-2, Department of the Interior Fire Boot Stipend

This memorandum provides eligibility requirements and payment procedures for the wildland fire boot stipend and supersedes the Branch of Fire Management memorandum FMB1700002 dated October 21, 2016.

The payment of a one-hundred dollar (\$100) annual stipend, based on a calendar year, is authorized for employees holding a valid incident qualification card with a fitness rating of moderate or arduous as outlined in Attachment 1 - Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Policy Memorandum 2011-2, Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Boot Stipend. Validity of the incident qualification card is determined by the fitness expiration date on the card. This authorization includes permanent full-time, term, career conditional, pathways, temporary, collateral duty, and casual employees hired using the administratively determined hiring authority.

The unit's fire management officers are responsible for determining who is eligible for the stipend, offering the stipend to all eligible employees, and tracking who receives the boot stipend each calendar year. The boot stipend payment is considered a taxable fringe benefit and shall be processed in accordance with Attachment 2 – Service Boot Stipend Payment Procedures.

A new process for payment of Administratively Determined (AD) boot stipends will be effective FY 2017. The Casual Payment Center (CPC) will automatically pay the boot stipend to eligible AD personnel on their first qualifying incident. Hiring units are responsible for tracking payments to ensure there are no duplicate payments made to individuals. For more information regarding the new process, please see the attached *2017 Boot Stipend Payment Procedures*.

Any further questions regarding this program should be directed to Reah Reedy, Administrative Officer, Fire Management Branch at 208-387-5736 or Ted Mason, FWS National Fire Safety Specialist at 208-387-5831.

Attachments

cc:

Cynthia Martinez, Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System
Jeff Rupert, Chief, Division of Natural Resources and Conservation Planning
Rebekah Giddings (WO-HR)
Casual Payment Center (CPC)



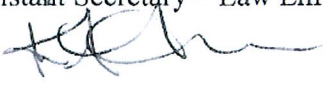
United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

OCT 14 2011

Memorandum

To: Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Director, National Park Service

From: Kim A. Thorsen, Deputy Assistant Secretary – Law Enforcement, Security, and
Emergency Management 

Subject: Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Policy Memorandum 2011-2
Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Boot Stipend

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) recently settled an arbitration case with the Federal Indian Service Employees (FISE) regarding the purchase of wildland fire boots. During the proceedings, the attorney for FISE wrote to the Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health in the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), contending "... the Department of the Interior pays for these boots for the wildland firefighters employed by the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (almost all of whom are non-Indian) while it forces the predominately American Indian firefighting crews who work alongside them to pay for their own boots." The FISE asked the DOL to "escalate this to the Secretarial level and ask Secretary Solis to contact Secretary Salazar directly" for "prompt attention" and an "immediate response" from the Department of the Interior (DOI) to their complaint.

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) establishes wildland fire standards for use by the bureaus and the NWCG Wildland Fire Boot standard has been adopted by each bureau as appropriate for safe work on the fireline. The NWCG concluded that protective footwear is very personal in nature and can be used by employees off the job site. Therefore, appropriate boots should be a condition of employment for firefighting positions. Boots should be purchased by the employee prior to employment.

Within the DOI, guidelines for purchasing boots for firefighters have indeed varied by bureau. However, the bureaus and Office of Wildland Fire, in consultation with the USDA Forest Service, have reached a consensus on the appropriate level and mechanism for providing financial assistance to all employees who, as a condition of employment, are required to purchase wildland fire boots. Our new policy will allow a \$100.00 per year stipend to qualified firefighters as described in the attachment. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact Kirk Rowdabaugh, 202-606-3447.

Attachment: Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Policy Memorandum 2011-2,
Department of the Interior Wildland Fire Boot Stipend

Office of Wildland Fire Coordination Policy 2011-2
Wildland Fire Boot Stipend

Purpose:

To provide Departmental guidance to the bureaus and offices on the payment of a yearly stipend to employees for wildland fire boots.

Background:

The National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) establishes wildland fire standards for use by the bureaus, and the NWCG Wildland Fire Boot standard has been adopted by each bureau as appropriate for safe work on the fireline. The NWCG has also concluded that protective footwear is very personal in nature and can be used by employees off the job site. Therefore, appropriate boots should be a condition of employment for firefighting positions and should be purchased by the employee prior to employment.

Scope:

This policy applies to all bureaus and offices within the Department, and to all employees, regardless of their employment status.

Time Frame:

This policy is effective January 1, 2012 and remains in effect until rescinded or modified.

Policy:

The payment of a one-hundred dollar (\$100.00) per year stipend is authorized for employees holding a valid Incident Qualification Card with a Fitness Rating of moderate or arduous, and who, as a condition of employment, are required to purchase wildland fire boots that satisfy the standards described in the *Interagency Standards for Fire and Fire Aviation Operations* and the *Wildland Fire and Aviation Program Management and Operations Guide (BLA)*. Validity of the Incident Qualification Card is determined by the Fitness Expiration date on the card.

Personnel hired under the Administratively-Determined (AD) authority who qualify will receive the stipend at time of payment following their first fire assignment in an IQCS qualified position requiring an arduous or moderate fitness rating in each calendar year. DOI bureaus and offices will follow established payment processes for disbursement of stipends for all other personnel assigned to wildland fires.



Kim A. Thorsen
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Law Enforcement, Security and Emergency Management

10/14/11
Date

Distribution:

Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, Fish & Wildlife Service
Director, National Park Service
DOI Fire Executive Council
DOI Bureau Fire Directors

2017 Boot Stipend Payment Procedures

The Unit's Zone Fire Management Officers (ZFMOs) are responsible for:

- Determining who is eligible for the stipend.
- Offering the stipend to all eligible employees.
- Ensuring proper payments to AD's are made by the Casual Payment Center (CPC).
- Tracking who receives the boot stipend each calendar year.

To ensure that duplicate payments are not made, supervisors of transferred employees should check with the employee's previous home unit before issuing the annual stipend.

The boot stipend payment is considered a taxable fringe benefit and shall be processed as follows:

Permanent Full Time Employees (PFT), Term, Career Seasonal, Pathways, and Temporary Employees

Preparedness and Hazardous Fuels Reduction (HFR) funded employees, submit boot stipend requests by mailing a completed FWS Form 3-206 (See Attachment 3) to the Interior Business Center (IBC) identifying the home unit cost center and the sub-activity used to fund the employee's base salary with "00" as the regional identifier and the project code of **FFBT0 for preparedness or use a W (WUI) or an N (Non-WUI) in front of FFBT (e.g. WFFBT or NFFBT) for HFR** (FF.F31) project code.

For eligible collateral duty employees whose base salary is non-fire funded, the annual stipend will be paid for using the applicable Preparedness or HFR funds. If a collateral duty employee's home unit does not receive preparedness or HFR funding, then the cost center for that employee should reflect the ZFMO's home unit.

Administratively Determined (AD) Employees

It is required to offer the boot stipend to AD employees hired into a position requiring a moderate or arduous fitness rating. To process the boot stipend for an AD, the home/hiring unit should follow the steps below. Beginning in FY 2017 boot stipend payments will automatically be paid to eligible AD personnel by the Casual Payment Center (CPC) on the first incident that they qualify.

- CPC will make payments and track to ensure duplicate FWS payments are not made; however, the hiring unit is responsible for verifying that the AD was not paid from another agency as well as ensuring the correct funding is charged.
- A list of allowable WBS funding codes for boot stipends has been sent to the CPC. If the CPC cannot cross walk the AD expenditures to an allowable WBS then they should contact Reah Reedy for clarification or approval. Please note that regional identifiers will no longer be utilized within the allowable AD boot stipend WBS.
- Below is a list of the allowable WBS:

Funding Type	WBS
Emergency Stabilization	FF.F2200000ADBT0
Fuels - WUI	FF.F3100000WADBT
Fuels - Non-WUI	FF.F3100000NADBT
Preparedness	FF.F1000000ADBT0
Severity	FF.F2100000ADBT0
Suppression	FF.F2000000ADBT0